



The HUGE Adventures of Starlight and Moonshine
by Dave Hawkins

Story Nine THE HEROES ARE BORN AGAIN

“We need a rope,” said Danny.

Joshua, his Grandfather, gazed around the room glumly. “I can’t imagine an artist like Monty would have any use for a rope.”

“Well, we have to find something to pull them up,” Moonshine put in unnecessarily.

“We already know that,” Lucy said sharply, then knew in an instant that she should apologise. “I’m sorry, Colonel. I don’t mean to take it out on you, but this is a matter of life and death – Monty’s, yours and Captain Starlight’s; maybe even ours.”

Joshua was gently patting the air with his hands, calling for calm. “We need to think.”

“Yes, Granddad, we do,” said Lucy, “And I believe we have to think comic-book thoughts. I remember a story in one of my comics where some girls escaped from a dreadful boarding school by climbing out of an upstairs window using bed-sheets tied together. Maybe Monty has a bed...?”

“Well,” said her Grandfather, “I know he’s an artist, but I don’t expect he slept on the floor.”

Following a quick search of the apartment, they not only found Monty’s bedroom, but also a linen cupboard. In minutes they had brought a number of bed-sheets into the main room. “They have to be twisted together like ropes,” ordered Lucy. “That way they will be strong enough to take the weight of Monty and Captain Starlight.”

It took a few more minutes to do this. During that short space of time, they heard a number of sounds from outside as the balcony crunched and groaned its way lower and lower down the wall. At one point, Starlight’s voice drifted up to them. “Not wishing to sound pushy, Moonshine; but would you mind getting a move on? I don’t think we can hang on for much longer.”

Finally they were ready. At Joshua’s suggestion, they tied one end of each bed-sheet rope to the legs of Monty’s drawing table, which they dragged to a corner close to the balcony door. Moonshine lowered each makeshift rope down to the two below. “Tie one round yourself first, Starlight,” he ordered, “Then do Monty’s. That’s the safest option.”

Starlight grunted. “Thank you, Moonshine. I am not entirely stupid.”

“Never imagined you were, old friend.” Moonshine tried to chuckle; but, at that moment he didn’t feel all that cheerful. “Just trying to be helpful.”

It took a while, and was very scary at times; but eventually they managed to pull both Monty and Starlight to safety. Once they were back in the apartment, Moonshine flumped into a chair and let out a huge sigh. “My word, Starlight, that was a close one. I thought we’d lost you at one stage.”

“Not at any stage,” said Danny with a big grin. “When you believe in something, REALLY believe, it comes true. Isn’t that right, Mister Brown?”

Monty was lying on his bed, looking a little the worse for wear; but he managed a smile anyway. “I agree, Danny; and forget the “Mister”, please: surely we’ve been through enough together to be on first-name terms?” The artist rolled on his side to look at the others in the room. “I really am very lucky. In the space of a few minutes I have my life back, plus I have made three new friends.”

“Only THREE?” said Moonshine, sounding rather disappointed. “What about us? Aren’t we your friends?”

“Yes you are, Moonshine,” said Monty. “But you and Starlight are more than simply friends. Not only are you my creation, but you are the only reason I am here now. If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t be alive to finish what I started: the comic that will give you life. And, thanks to meeting you in person, I know exactly what you look like. Now I can finish what will one day become a classic – The Wonderful Adventures of Starlight and Moonshine.”

“That’s something I wanted to speak with you about,” said Moonshine, strolling over to look down at Monty’s drawing board. “I’m not entirely happy with your title. Might I suggest you change it? Instead of “Wonderful”, how about HUGE?”

Monty thought for a moment, then replied: “You’re right, Moonshine. Why didn’t I think of that?”

Danny leaned over to grin at Monty. “That’s because, right now, you’re just a grown-up. When you can start believing like a kid, then you’ll know what comic-books are really about.”

Monty scanned the faces above him, found Joshua’s and said: “I hope you realise how special your grandchildren are, Joshua. Keep them safe; and bring them back for a visit, if you decide on taking a trip into comic-book history again.”

The next part of the plan worked, up to a point. Leaving Monty Brown to continue creating their story, the others Moonberry Pie-d back to Joshua’s house; and from there, Starlight and Moonshine where were able to return into their own comic-book story. The final stage promised to be a little more difficult. Lucy, however, seemed to have it figured out. “You two stay here for at least two hours,” she said to Joshua and Danny. “I have to get back before Mum realises I’ve even gone.”

Taking the Starlight and Moonshine comic with her, and not forgetting her Moonberry Pie cookie, she raced home and was coming downstairs just as her Mum came out of the kitchen and said: “What have you been doing all this time? We have to hurry. The pie won’t cook itself.”

It didn't. Aside from the mixing, the oven did the rest. The family, including Danny and her Grandfather, were seated around the table when Lucy brought the pie in on a tray. Joshua appeared surprised as Lucy and her Mum hoped he would be. "My, that does look good," he said, "And it smells delicious." He had taken only a single bite and was gazing into the air with a look of pleasant memories on his face, when he commented: "I imagine this is supposed to be a new recipe, but I'm sure I may have tasted something like it before. It reminds me very much of Moonberry..."

"Stop, Granddad!" said Danny hastily. "Don't say any more."

"Danny's right," added Lucy. "You never know where you might end up."

Their mother frowned. "What are you three talking about?"

Danny gave her a reassuring smile. "You don't want to know, Mum. And even if you did, you just wouldn't believe it."